



ATIKAMEKSHENG
ANISHNAWBEK

Community Notice #2

MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTIONS STATE OF EMERGENCY

Mental Health & Addictions State of Emergency - An update to inform the community and staff of Atikameksheng Anishnawbek from the Emergency Response Team (ERT) on the State of Emergency for the Mental Health & Addictions (MH&A) Crisis.

On March 10th, ERT members including the Director of Health and Wellness, the Director of Governance & Special Projects, Gimaa, and the Chief Executive Officer, met with various provincial and federal government lower management officials to lay the groundwork for the support required to address the critical issues at hand. We discussed our strategy and indicated that we would be refining our strategy documents further before submitting to the officials and will allow them some time to review and discuss amongst themselves before meeting with them again.

Here are the next steps that we are undertaking:

1) Community Engagement: We have received many letters and emails from our community indicating their support and their offer to assist in the strategy. They all state that this strategy must be community driven; Gimaa and Council and Administration agree so we are exploring options on how to have our first meeting with the community. It is challenging because of the COVID-19 protocols but we will figure out a way to have a meeting. One option is to host it at the ball field in an open-air environment and use our sound system. Look for a callout in our upcoming flyers.

2) Complete strategy documents and submit to federal and provincial agencies: We are close to completing the strategy documents and will be forwarding them to federal and provincial agencies by March 26. We will provide them with 2 weeks review period and then coordinate a meeting the following week (week of April 12-16).

3) Developing a Legal Strategy: Gimaa and Council are currently speaking with our legal counsel regarding our strategy when discussing the MH&A Strategy with higher federal and provincial government officials. We wish to reiterate that we are drastically underfunded and they legally have the responsibility to fund and support our Nation in times of Emergency, regardless if they are physical or mental states of emergency.

4) Emergency Response Coordinator: Administration is considering hiring an Emergency Response Coordinator on a short-term contract to handle both the COVID-19 and MHA emergencies. This person would act as liaison between our ERT, federal and provincial agencies, and our partners.

5) Communication Campaign: Administration has hired a new Communications Coordinator who will assist with communicating and engaging members and government officials. We have also procured Launchpad Creative to develop a MHA communications campaign to highlight key messages that we want to convey to our membership, and the Communications Coordinator will be assisting with the development.

6) Committee Engagement: Meetings are being planned with all Committees to review the strategies and provide input and identify how they will assist, and how they can align their activities to the MHA Strategy.

7) Developing Partnerships:

- 1. Thunderbird Partnership Foundation:** The Director of Health has signed an agreement with the Thunderbird Partnership Foundation to implement an Opioid and Methamphetamine Survey (30 adults/30 youth) to determine the true numbers of members affected. The lead for this survey is the Health Programs Manager and Jennifer Brideau, Wellness Coordinator (Mental Health). This survey will provide both Atikameksheng statistics and national statistics.
- 2. The Family Enrichment Centre:** We have been in contact with The Family Enrichment Centre (TEC) for increased counselling supports.
- 3. Noojimo Health:** We have partnered with this organization to access mental health and addiction counselling supports. They are Indigenous Counsellors who specialize in different areas both western and traditional. Lisa Osawamick, MSW, has an office at the Independent Living Centre and accepts self-referrals.

4. **WIKWEMIKOONG UNCEDED:** This partnership will assist our community with the development of a Suboxone/Methadone Clinic in the Community along with Land Base Treatment and Detox Programs and implementing a Children Wellness Assessment program.

5. **CITY OF GREATER SUDBURY:** They have requested a partnership to assist in the development of a Transitional Home to help our members experiencing houselessness / homelessness in Sudbury.

8) **Funding for MHA Strategy:**

1. **2021-22 Budgets:** The Departments have included items from the Strategy into the Budgets and identifying the needed funds for implementation.
2. **Atikameksheng Trust:** Gimaa has contacted the Trustee Chairperson to start discussing how we can utilize the Trust to support the strategy financially. Gimaa and Council are prepared to submit an application to the Trust and may require a community wide vote. Provision 7.01(c) states that monies can be used “...for relief in the event of a natural or similar disaster.” Gimaa and Council intend to pursue support under this provision.
3. **Lobbying and Fundraising Strategy:** Council is exploring an interim option of hiring a consultant to develop a lobbying and fundraising strategy to support the MHA Strategy activities. This strategy would provide options on how to support immediate and long-term needs identified in the MHA Strategy.

We are determined to find a permanent solution and are prioritizing the immediate needs of the community through the exploration and expansion of land, cultural and spiritual-based services/activities, harm reduction services, food security programs, mental health services, rapid housing programs, and more.

Building strong infrastructure with an emphasis on culturally safe programming and support services will provide our members with the necessary foundation to begin their healing journey. In addition, efforts to secure provincial and federal funding for these critical support services is underway.

We would like to take a moment to acknowledge and thank all our band members who reached out with helpful input and guidance. Collaboration efforts from our community, staff, and leadership are integral to the development and execution of the strategy -- we are all in this together.

In the near future, ERT members including the Director of Health and Wellness, the Director of Governance & Special Projects, Gimaa, and the Chief Executive Officer will continue to meet with provincial and federal officials to develop a tailored, in-depth, plan of action that addresses the immediate and long-term needs of the community.

Future community updates will continue to be circulated through our community flyer and social media channels.

If you need immediate support for any mental health issues, addictions, or family support, please contact:

Mental Health Wellness Coordinator, (vacant), however we have **Noojiimo Health** at 1-888-970-0330 or lisa@noojimohealth.ca or www.noojimohealth.ca, James Bolan at 705-207-0422

Addictions Wellness Coordinator, Jennifer Brideau at 705-690-7819 or jbrideau@wfn.com

Family Advocacy Workers, Rachel Pattison at 705-919-4634

24-hour Crisis Line (HSN), at 705-675-4760 or

Sudbury Mental Health & Addictions Centre (HSN), 127 Cedar Street at 705-523-4988

As a reminder, we have assigned our Director of Health and Wellness as the lead person for this state of emergency. If you would like more information regarding the strategy, or find out how you can support us please contact:

Carmen Wabegijig-Nootchtai at director.health-well@wfn.com

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